MEMOIRS OF THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

No. 39

Lha-luṅ Temple, Spyi-ti

BY

H. LEE SHUTTLEWORTH, M.A., late I.C.S.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

A. H. FRANCKE, PH.D.

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PLATE.

PLATE : LHA-LUṄ TEMPLE, SPYI-TI.

(*a*) Carved lintel beam.

(*b*) North wall of Gser-khaṅ.

(*c*) East wall and a small part of the north wall of Gser-khaṅ.

(*d*) East wall, centre, of Gser-khaṅ.

(*e*) South wall of Gser-khaṅ.

(*f*) Vairocana image in Lha-khaṅ-dkar-po.

TEXT ILLUSTRATION.

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PREFACE.

Mr. Lee Shuttleworth's account of the *Lha-luṅ* temple in *Spyi-ti* is of great importance with regard to the study of the Atīśa times of Tibetan Buddhism.

The first scholar who told us something of those times was Sarat Chandra Das, who in 1893 published the little pamphlet *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*. Unfortunately he does not tell us from what sources he drew his information. In this article occasional mention is made of *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po* (956-1054 A.D.), a Tibetan priest who had been sent to India to study Sanskrit at Vikramaśīla, one of the last centres of Indian Buddhism.

When travelling about in Ladakh, *Spyi-ti*, etc., between 1896 and 1914, I came occasionally to places which people connected with *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po*, and a closer study of such sites, first of all of *'A-lci* in Ladakh, convinced me of the fact that a good number of relics of the eleventh century had escaped the ravages of time.

It was then my earnest desire to get some reliable information about *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po*; but only in 1926 was I enabled to study the biography of this famous lama, which had been discovered, copied and translated by Joseph Gergan of the Moravian Mission. From this book we learn that *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po* obtained for Tibet the services of 32 Kashmiri Buddhist artists who were clever at making images, and that the best of them was called *Bidhaka*. At first three principal monasteries were erected, those of *Kho-char* in Purang, of *Mtho-gliṅ* (or *-ldiṅ*) in Guge, and of *Ñar-ma* in Ladakh.

Still later, 108 smaller temples were built, of which only the following names are given: (1) *B̀zer-wer* in Purang, (2) *Go-khar* of *Kha-tse*, (3) *Pi-ti*, (4) *Li-ri*, (5) *Ta-pho*, (6) *Te-ri*, (7) *Zad-waṅ*, (8) *Sneẖu*, (9) *Ti-yag*, (10) *Tshaṅs-med*, (11) *Pho-ri*, (12) *Gyaṅ-skur-ri-hri*, (13) *Rgyu-laṅ*, (14) *Ro-pag*, (15) *Hu-bu-laṅ-ka*, (16) *Dri-la-chuṅ*, (17) most of the temples of *Roṅ-chuṅ* (on the Sutlej near *Hrib-skyes*).

Of the above names, the following only can be identified: *Mtho-gliṅ* in Guge is the Totling of the maps, a place recently visited by Rawling, Young, Sven Hedin and others. *Ñar-ma* was discovered a few years ago by Joseph Gergan as a ruined site near *Khri-rtse* in Ladakh. Three of the names of the list evidently refer to *Spyi-ti*; *viz. Pi-ti*, *Li-ri* and *Ta-pho*. *Pi-ti* stands apparently for the capital of *Spyi-ti*, *Graṅ-mkhar*. Therefore, I suppose that it points to *Lha-luṅ*, a temple close to *Graṅ-mkhar*. *Li-ri* may be a mistake for *Lha-ri* in *Spyi-ti*, and *Ta-pho* evidently stands for *Rta-pho*. I venture even to say that *Pho-ri* may be identical with *Pu-ri* in Guge (see *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, I, p. 27). In all these places, with the exception of *Lha-ri*

ancient temples of the eleventh century have been observed. *Ro-pag* is stated by Joseph Gergan to be in Kunawar, and *Hu-bu-laṅ-kar* near Chini.

Joseph Gergan, in his account of the *Ñar-ma* ruins, produces another list of temples of *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po*, as follows : (1) *'A-lci-chos-ḫkhor*, (2) *Phyi-gliṅ-gsum-mdaḫ*, (3) *Maṅ-rgyu*, (4) *Wan-la*, (5) *Gyuṅ-druṅ*, (6) *'A-ti-tse*, (7) *Dṅul-ḫbye-dpal-ldan-rtse*, (8) *Sa-bu-Tar-chud* (or *Thar-rgyun*)-*lha-khaṅ*, (9) *Sle-lha-khaṅ-gsum-rtsegs*, (10) *Sle-chos-ḫkhor*. All these temples belong to Ladakh, are in easy reach and most of them have been examined.

Besides these, the following temples were reported or proved to be of the eleventh century : (1) *Sa-ni-Ka-ni-ka* in *Zaṅs-dkar* (before restoration), (2) the ruin east of *Bab-sgo*, (3) *Rgya-mtsha* ruin north of Leh, (4) *Lha-khaṅ* of Shel, (5) the *Lha-bcu-rtse-lha-khaṅ* of *Khan-ji*, (6) the *Mun-dig-lha-khaṅ* ruin in the *Mkhar-bu* valley, (7) the *Lha-khaṅ-gog-po* ruin of *Wa-kha*, (8) *Ston-pa-me-meḫi-dgon-pa* of *Guṅ-raṅ*, (9) the ruined *Lha-khaṅ* of *Gcig-gtan*, (10) *Chos-ḫkhor* of *Si-su*, (11) *Ka-rnam* of Kunawar, (12) *Lo-tsa-baḫi-lha-khaṅ* of *Na-ko*, (15) *Lha-braṅ* of Kyahar, (16) *Na-thaṅ* in *Spyi-ti*, (17) *Lha-bla-maḫi-dgon-pa* of *Skyi-bar*.

In his notes on *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po's* biography, Joseph Gergan gives another list of more than 30 temples of *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po*. Most of the names are repetitions from his other lists. The following may be new. *Ñar-chuṅ*, *Bkra-śis-sgaṅ*, *Dben-sa*, *Mgar-ba-groṅ*, *Kyi-li-bug* (all in the immediate neighbourhood of *Ñar-ma*), *Chos-skor*(-*ḫkhor*) at *Sgaṅ-las* near Leh, White Temple of Hundar (Nubra), Red Temple of Hundar (Nubra), *Lha-braṅ* of *Dmar-kha*, *Rdor-lha* of *Kyi-khyim* (*Spyi-ti*), *Dpal-ldan-rtse* of Mulbe.

Let me add that the name of *Chos-skor*(-*ḫkhor*) occurs twice as a local name in the Muhammadan Suru valley. One is found on the map (Chuskor) close to Suru castle, and another close to Mainji. They are probably the sites of similar temples.

As, however, *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po* was not the only priest who erected temples in the eleventh century, but as the fathers of the *Bkaḫ-rgyud-pa* sect did the same, it is not clear in several cases to which of the two sources a certain temple owes its origin. Thus with regard to the *Gyuṅ-druṅ-seṅ-ge-sgaṅ* temple, the temples of *Wan-la*, *Khan-ji* and *Gcig-gtan*, I was informed that they were connected with the *Bkaḫ-rgyud-pa* school (*Bkaḫ-gdams-pa*). And so it may be with several others.

Let me also emphasize that the eleventh century is by no means the earliest era of Buddhist temples in the ancient West Tibetan empire. A good number are asserted to have been erected by Padmasambhava in the eighth century; and the temples of Triloknāth in Chamba and Gandhola in Lahul claim to go back to the times of Nāgārjuna. As Dr. J. Ph. Vogel points out, Triloknāth is a place, where the ancient Indian Buddhism was gradually moulded into Lamaism.

A comparative study of all the eleventh century temples of Ladakh will in course of time enable us to distinguish them from temples of other times. Only a few characteristics may now be pointed out.

They may consist of a single hall or of a collection of such surrounded by a wall. The door in many cases opens towards the east.

Vairocana (*Rnam-par-snaṅ-mdzad*) was apparently a favoured deity in them. Several temples were called after him. Compare the following:—(1) *Mtho-ldiṅ* (*-gliṅ*), (2) *Ta-bo* (*Rta-pho*), (3) *Lha-luṅ*, (4) *Na-ko*, (5) *Guṅ-raṅ*, (6) *'A-lci*, (7) *Maṅ-rgyu*, (8) *Phyi-gliṅ-gsum-mdaḫ*. Halls called *Gser-(gyi-lha)-khaṅ* are found at *Mtho-ldiṅ*, *Rta-pho*, *Lha-luṅ*. Halls called *Lo-tsa-baḫi-lha-khaṅ* (temple of the translator) are found at *Spu*, *'A-lci*, *Na-ko*. Similarly we find halls with the title *ston-pa*, teacher, at *Guṅ-ran* and *Shel*. Halls called *Chos-ḫkhor* are found at *Ñar-ma*, *Si-su*,' *A-lci*, *Sle* (Leh). This name refers to a passage built for the circumambulation of the pilgrims. Halls called *Gsum-rtsegs*, three-storied, were found at *Mtho-ldiṅ*, *Sle* (Leh), *'A-lci*, *Na-thaṅ*.

The medicine Buddhas in paintings or images were found at *Lha-luṅ* and *Rta-pho* and probably also occur in other temples.

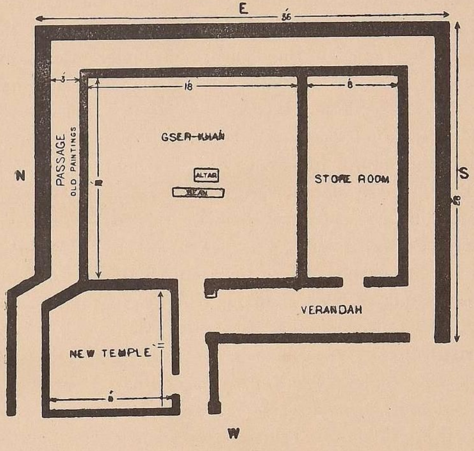
The leading fossil, so to say, we probably have in the *Rnam-par-snaṅ-mdzad*, which may be discovered in many more of *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po's* temples. And, as has been pointed out in Mr. Shuttleworth's article, this deity was of great importance in the eleventh century to show the Tibetans a way from the Bon religion to Buddhism.

A. H. FRANCKE.

LHA-LUṄ TEMPLE, SPYI-TI.

General.—On August 18th, 1924, I visited *Lha-luṅ* (Lilung on the Survey Map) from *Graṅ-mkhar*, a walk of six miles, with my wife and the Rev. Joseph Gergan of the Moravian Mission, who had stayed there a night on a previous occasion in 1921 and told me of the temple. I had seen the village from a short distance in 1918, but had not then been informed that this small secluded village up the *Liṅ-ti* valley contained any feature of unusual interest.

GSER-KHAṄ TEMPLE
SKETCH PLAN



So in 1924 I was delighted to find an almost perfectly preserved eleventh century temple, smaller than the famous main hall at *Ta-bo*, but nowise inferior to it in artistic merit. As no account of it was known to me to be on record, I did what I could in the few hours at my disposal to note down the main features, to take rough measurements, to sketch a ground plan and to use to the best advantage the only six ¼ plate films that I had with me. The photographs then taken will, I hope, besides elucidating and supplementing the description, enable others to add to my tentative identifications.

In these dimly lit old temples the identification of the numerous images and paintings is always difficult and uncertain. One's time is often short and usually the local lamas and laymen can afford little help. This was the case at *Lha-luṅ*, where the images exceed sixty in number and most of them are not met with in more modern temples. Dr. Francke's notes contain much valuable information on some of the images and other matters.

The villagers and lamas say that there were originally nine temples of *Lo-tsa-ba Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po's* time of which eight were destroyed by the *Sog-pos* (*i.e.* Mongols) in the seventeenth century. Now there is but one temple

known as *Gser-khaṅ* [1] and a group of lamas' houses to its west. Among these houses is an externally inconspicuous *mchod-rten,* or rather room, containing a four-bodied figure, resembling the *Rnam-par-snaṅ-mdzad* in the large temple at *Ta-bo.* All the above buildings occupy a small plateau immediately over and to the east of the *Lha-luṅ* village, high above the right bank of the small nullah, that joins the *Liṅ-ti* river about 4 miles from the junction of the *Liṅ-ti* with the *Spyi-ti.*

Exterior of Gser-khaṅ Temple.—The *Gser-khaṅ* temple faces west, and is flat-roofed. Its exterior dimensions are about 36 feet north to south and 28 feet east to west. The roof is about 15 feet high. A small temple room, 11 feet square inside, is built on to the north-west front immediately to the north of the main temple entrance.

The upper part of the outside walls is painted in alternate horizontal layers of yellow, brown and red lime wash. There is an interior circumambulatory passage, about 3 feet wide, within the north, east, and south walls, and so passing behind the small temple, the main *Gser-khaṅ* hall and the small store room adjacent to the *Gser-khaṅ* on the south and under the same roof. The entrance to this passage is by the small temple and it leads out into the verandah in front of the store room, as see the plan. The north part of the passage contains old frescoes all very much worn. With a lighted candle I was able to make out ten faint life-sized Buddha figures in dark tints of red, yellow and blue. Most of the detail had gone.

The small temple to the north of the entrance door of the *Gser-khaṅ* contains modern images of the three 'Protectors of Tibet', *i.e.* (1) A red *H̱jam-dbyaṅs,* (2) a white eleven-headed, eight-armed *Spyan-ras-gzigs,* and (3) a blue *Phyag-na-rdo-rje,* also a wall inscription of the time of King *Seṅ-ge-rnam-rgyal* (c. 1590-1635 A.D.).

Interior of Gser-khaṅ Temple.—The *Gser-khaṅ* is a square room, measuring 18 feet by 18 feet, and 14 feet high. The ceiling is composed of planks resting on cross beams which run both ways. The intersection of these cross beams divides the wood ceiling into 36 square panels, on which are painted circular and rectangular geometrical designs. All the woodwork is of blue pine (*kail,* i.e. *Pinus Excelsa*), which is not indigenous to *Spyi-ti,* but imported, probably from Kunawar. It is carefully smoothed and finished, altogether unlike the rough-hewn planks and beams found elsewhere in temples and private houses in *Spyi-ti* now-a-days. Circular metal bosses ornamented with floral designs are attached to the beams at regular intervals. There are no pillars.

In the middle of the room is an ordinary small wood altar. On it is a wood Buddha. A copper and silver butter lamp, 21 inches high, and two white *mchod-rten,* $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 feet high, the last an old wood one, stand near the altar.

At my visit a beautifully carved lintel beam, $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, lay on the floor by the altar. It was said to have been originally over the entrance door. The wood is also blue pine.

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[1] The name *Gser-khaṅ,* gold or yellow temple, reminds one of the *Gser-gyi-lha-khaṅ* temple at *Ta-bo. Antiquities of Indian Tibet,* Part I, p. 42. (A. H. Francke.)

It contains five panels placed horizontally. Of these the three to the right are shown in the photo. (*a*); the two end panels are much damaged. The subjects of the panels commencing from the proper right are as follows:—

(1) The fasting Buddha is sitting, perhaps under the Bodhi tree. To his left stands a female figure.

(2) Two large robed figures with haloes sit on thrones and hold long pieces of cloth (?). There is a kneeling figure and two others to their right; a similar kneeling figure and three others to the left in attitudes of prayer or adoration. Two small dwarfs crouch one under each throne. This panel apparently depicts two phases of one scene.[1]

(3) The Buddha sits with upraised right hand holding a sword, with which he is cutting off his hair, that he grasps in his left hand. On his right is "The Stūpa of the Hair of the Buddha," and on his left the Bo tree.[2]

(4) A house with pillars and eaves is depicted. Over the front door sit two figures, a man and a woman. In the right and left upper corners stand two trumpeters. In the right and left lower corners stand two men with clubs. There are lions at either side of the door.[3]

(5) This panel, which is very much broken, represents a horse, Kaṇṭhaka (?).

The divisions between these panels are carved with round and square floral designs. The style of the carving and the treatment are distinctly Indian.

The West Wall, in the centre of which is the entrance door, contains no figures in relief like the other three, but only frescoes and an inscription in the old orthography of the eleventh century.

The principal wall paintings include three old well executed magic circles or *Dus-kyi-ḫkhor-lo* (*Sanskrit, Maṇḍalas*) above the door. From right to left are the circles of *Bde-mchog*, *Mi-bskyod-pa* and *Ḫjigs-byed*. To the right and left of the door are representations, 4 feet 2 inches high, of a blue *Phyag-na-rdo-rje* and of a red *Rta-mgrin* painted in Indian style. Other paintings are of horses and a man in a round hat and Indian attire.

The north, east and south walls contain elaborate groups of painted clay mouldings in full relief of Buddhas, Tārās, Dēvas, animals, real and legendary,

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[1] Subject uncertain.

[2] *Cf.* Plate XIX, p. 72, *Guide Catalogue, Musée Guimet,* J. Hackin, Paris et Bruxelles, 1923, for an illustration of this incident in a painting. I can find no Tibetan representation of this subject in mouldings or wood carving. [Representations of this incident are indeed scarce, but for a well preserved example compare Stele C (*a*) 2 and Plate XX in the Catalogue of the Museum of Archæology at Sarnath by D. R. Sahni. *Ed.*] In J. R. A. S., October 1928, pp. 826-7, Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy enumerates four reliefs representing the Bodhisattva's *cūḍā-chedana.* These are a Gandharan fragment from Turkestan (Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, pp. 209, 220 and pl. XLVII), the Sārnāth relief (Burgess, *Ancient Monuments*, p. 67), that in Boro-budūr (Krom, *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 75, 76) and that in the Ānanda temple in Pagān (Cohn, *Buddha in die Kunst des Ostens*, pl. 73. Seidenstücker, *Die Buddha-legende in den Skulpturen des Ananda-Tempels zu Pagan*, Hamburg, 1916, p. 47). This article fully discusses the literary descriptions of the hair-cutting episode, pp. 820-24.

[3] Subject uncertain.

flowers, leaves, stūpas, palaces, arches and other ornamental details, as shown in the photographs. Each of these three walls will now be described in turn.

The North Wall. In the centre a three-headed crowned figure sits on a lotus throne, supported on a standing dwarf.

To either side of the dwarf stands an open-mouthed lion, apparently to mark the throne as a *siṁhāsana*. The image was said to be *Rnam-rgyal-ma*,[1] a female *Yid-dam* or tutelary. It is three feet high and has eight hands. The uppermost left hand holds a wheel. (*See* photo. *b*.)

On either side of the throne is a small bird with a human face of blue colour.

Immediately above the *Rnam-rgyal-ma* image is a floral scroll design. Its centre is a *Khyuṅ* (*Garuḍa*) and on either side are two *Chu-srin* (*Makara*). The scroll design ends in two peacocks facing inwards.

A little way above the *Rnam-rgyal-ma* within the floral design is a small three-headed figure said to be *Kun-ḫgrig* (?).[2]

The remaining wall space on either side of the above central group is filled up with 16 sitting *Sgrol-mas*,[3] each two feet high.

There are eight on each side in groups of two. Each image has its hands in a different posture. Below the images is a three feet high painted dado. In its centre is a five-headed figure, with small Buddhas within circles on either side. There are 72 of these small round medallion paintings on this wall.

The East Wall is the most important and contains three main groups of images, artistically arranged within a general flowing lotus plant design that spreads over the entire wall. Lotus buds, leaves, and the lotus thrones, on which the gods sit, are all integral parts of the design. This wall, like the others, is 18 feet long by 14 feet high. In the centre sits the Buddha, *Śa-kya-thub-pa*, on a lotus throne. At either side of the lotus beneath the figure two crouching lions face each other, themselves on small lotus thrones enclosed in rounds of the floral scroll design. (*See* photo. *d*.)

On either side of the throne and the lions sit two small gods, also encircled in rounds of the floral ornament. The god on the proper right (north)

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[1] This deity is also known as *Gtsug-gtor-can*, as noted by Joseph Gergan. Both names are given in Grünwedel's *Mythologie*, where on p. 131 this deity is depicted with 3 faces. (A. H. Francke.)

A. Getty's *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, 2nd edition, 1928, describes *Gtsug-tor-rnam-par-rgyal-ma* as Ushṇīshavijayā, p. 135; see Plate XLI. A title page of the *Rgyud* section of the *Bkaḫ-ḫgyur* in the South Kensington Indian Museum (I. M. 317-1920) contains a miniature painting of her. At *Lha-luṅ* her usual emblems, the *viśva-vajra*, double thunderbolt, *kalaśa*, ambrosia cup, small Buddha image, bow and arrow are missing.

[2] The name given to this deity may possibly be *Kun-rigs*, omniscient, an epithet of Vairocana. In connection with the name *Kun-ḫgrig*, given by me, Dr. A. H. Francke observes that the 32 stucco wall figures in the main *Rnam-par-snaṅ-mdzad* hall at *Ta-bo* are called *Kun-ḫgrig-lha-tshogs*, "the all-suited company of gods," and that they represent deities of the Hindu pantheon, modified by Bon-po ideas. He suggests that other hitherto unexplained images at *Lha-luṅ* and similar eleventh century temples, *e.g.* Basgo, now in ruins, may have to be classed under the *Kun-ḫgrig* heading. As to Basgo, see *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, I, p. 86.

[3] Joseph Gergan informed Dr. A. H. Francke that the temple contained 21 *Sgrol-mas*. That number might be expected and was found at Tar (*cf. Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, I, p. 94). The other 5 may be amongst the numerous crowned figures on the east and south walls. *See* also S. Ch. Das' Dictionary under *Sgrol-ma*.

is a three-headed Indian Dēva; his heads are bare and he wears only a body cloth; his left knee and fore-arm are raised; his right shin and foot rest on the throne with the sole of the foot upwards; his right hand is extended downwards. This figure is said to be *Lha-gtsaṅ-pa* (Brahmā). (*See* photo. *c.*)

On the left (south) sits a crowned Dēva with the palms of his hands together, his left knee raised and supporting his left elbow. His right leg is flat on the throne behind his left foot. This god is said to be *Brgya-sbyin* (Indra). (*See* photo. *d.*)

Under the double lion throne are two birds (parrots?), not shown in the photos., from whose heads starts the floral decoration. On either side of the pair of birds is a line of small seated Buddha-like figures, five on each side.

The *Śa-kya-thub-pa* has a double horse-shoe arched back to his throne, placed between pillars, which support a roof surmounted by a central umbrella (*gdugs*), flanked on either side by two lower pointed *mchod-rten*-like knobs. Two birds sit one on either side.

Outside each of the two pillars, and on the same level, stand two elaborate cruciform based stūpas or *mchod-rten.* Both the spires are surmounted by umbrellas similar to the Burmese *hti* (not by the later *Ñi-zla* emblems) and the *kalaśa* as found on Hindu spires. The stūpa on the left has doors or windows; that on the right a triple flight of steps. A guardian tiger rampant stands against each stūpa, with one fore paw against the dome and a hind paw against the base. Each tiger on its upraised fore paw supports an acrobat with a Buddha's chignon. The figure to the right holds his chin in his hands. Their feet are above their heads and hold up pedestals for a pair of elephant-trunked *Chu-srin* (*Makara*), whose tails run up into a scroll design terminating in the mouth of a grotesque gargoyle face of a *Khyuṅ* (*Garuḍa*)[1] high up near the roof and immediately over the *Thub-pa.* Above the gargoyle is an umbrella.

The composition of the general scheme is remarkably good and well-balanced; every detail is an integral part of the whole.

To the right and left of the central group are two minor, but also elaborate groups, which consist each of a main crowned and jewelled sitting Bodhisattva figure under arches or palaces, each bearing five stūpas.[2] The image on the right is silver in colour. The palace or arch containing this figure is supported by dwarfs standing between pairs of pillars; that on the left is supported by rampant tigers facing outwards. (*See* photos. *c* and *d.*)

Under each of the large figures are two pairs of seated crowned figures, Tārās (*Sgrol-ma*) or other such deities. The one to the Brahmā's right is apparently a male.

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[1] This is a representation of a *Garuḍa* eating *nāgas,* of which *makaras* are a form, as is pointed out by Dr. A. H. Francke, who compares Plate XIII, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet,* I.

[2] Dr. A. H. Francke writes: "I have noticed that in the centuries after 700 A.D. the Tibetans were in the habit of furnishing their representations of Buddha often with two Bodhisat companions. Sometimes Buddha is accompanied by Maitreya and Padmapāṇi, sometimes by Vajrapāṇi and Mañjuśrī, etc. The image to the right is furnished with a lotus flower as an attribute (Padmapāṇi ?). The position of its right leg is not often found in Buddhist art. It is more frequent in Hindu and Bon-po art."

The only frescoes still visible on this wall are two small medallions containing Buddhas in the two upper corners above the outer stūpas of the two flanking palace arches.

In the centre of the South Wall sits a four-armed crowned figure in adamantine pose. It was considered to be *Spyan-ras-gzigs*. His lotus throne is supported by a lotus flower and two well executed elephants; above sits Amitābha Buddha (*Hod-dpag-med, Snaṅ-ba-mthaḫ-yas*) in a niche under a tall stūpa surmounted by a ball and sharp point. On either side are two smaller circular stūpas. (*See* photo. *e*.)

To the right and left of the central stūpa are two flying figures (*apsaras*) in attitudes of prayer or adoration.

The whole of the above group is flanked by two vertical lines, each of four seated figures, four crowned and four in a Buddha's mendicant guise.

Names were assigned to all of the Buddhas, but the identification of these eight figures is uncertain. They may be the medicine Buddhas.[1]

There are many faint paintings in medallions on this wall to either side of and below the figures. Two large Buddhas within circles are visible, also various Indian palace scenes. In the lower right hand corner is an inscription of 37 lines.

Lha-khaṅ-dkar-po.—The separate small room among the lamas' houses measures only 12 by 9 feet inside. It is called *Lha-khaṅ-dkar-po*, 'white gods' house.' The quadruple image was said to be *Lha-dbaṅ-brgya-sbyin, i.e.* Indra. (*See* photo. *f*.) But it is, I think, Vairocana, as at *Ta-bo*,[2] and is the sole remains of a large temple hall. The entrance door is to the east.

The distance from the ground to the crowns of this quadruple image is 10 feet 4 inches. The pedestal alone is 5 feet 8 inches high and each image 4 feet 8 inches high. The base is square in section and measures 6 feet by 6 feet. Above this it becomes a cup-shaped round pedestal, 3 feet in diameter, but swelling out to $5\frac{1}{4}$ feet in diameter above.

Above this round pedestal, four pairs of grotesque lions and four pillars with *Nor-bu* signs in the centre support a round slab, which bears the four

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[1] Dr. A. H. Francke considers the Buddhas to be four of the eight medicine Buddhas (*Sman-bla*). (*See Ant. Ind. Tibet*, I, p. 41, for their names.) Joseph Gergan reported that he found the complete eight at *Lha-luṅ*. Dr. Francke informs me that three of the names noted by me probably represent *Bcom-ldan-ḫdas, Chos-grags-rgya-mtshoḫi-dpal* and *Sṅon-mkhyen-rgyal-po*. He writes: "I believe that *Lha-luṅ* was a famous seat of the medicine Buddhas two centuries before *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po*. It is apparently mentioned in the *Rgyal-rabs* under *Ḫod-sruṅ*. *Ant. Ind. Tibet*, II, p. 92."

The four Bodhisattva and the four Buddha figures on the south wall are, I consider, the eight medicine Buddhas found by Joseph Gergan, as a medicine Buddha may also appear in Bodhisattva form, see A. Getty, *Gods of Northern Buddhism*, pp. 24-25, 2nd edition.

[2] Dr. A. H. Francke writes: "The image certainly represents *Rnam-par-snaṅ-mdzad* or Vairocana. But it is of great interest to hear that people call it *Lha-dbaṅ-brgya-sbyin*, or Indra. This fact reminds me of *Ta-bo*, where the corresponding image of *Rnam-par-snaṅ-mdzad* is called *Snaṅ-stoṅ-brgya-sbyin*, or 'Indra of 1000 fold light.' Here we have the genesis of the leader of the Dhyāni-Buddhas. He was developed out of Indra, the chief god of the Tibetans according to the *Kesar-saga*. In *Rin-chen-bzaṅ-po's* days, both names, *Rnam-par-snaṅ-mdzad* and *Brgya-sbyin*, were apparently in use for the same image."

lotus thrones, on which the four crowned clay images (of which the photo. shows only two) sit. They face east, south, west, and north with their backs against a central wood pillar, which runs through the pedestal. The two which face west and north appear in the photo. Each has its hands in a different posture. The images are crowned, jewelled and have elongated ears. There are traces of blue and yellow paint on them, but their colour is mainly a greyish white.

This concludes the description of *Lha-luṅ*, based on the notes taken at my visit, which was made during a march back to Kulu, where I had in a few days to make over charge to my successor. Directions were given by me through Joseph Gergan for the wall inscriptions to be exactly copied, but these copies did not reach me. Parts of these wall inscriptions are obliterated. The two in the *Gser-khaṅ* are in the ancient eleventh century orthography. That in the small temple is, as noted, of *Seṅ-ge-rnam-rgyal's* time.[1] Unfortunately, early darkness owing to a storm in the afternoon and the exhaustion of my candles did not at my visit permit even of a cursory examination of the subject-matter of these inscriptions, which were said to be records of restorations.

[1] So Dr. A. H. Francke informs me after examining copies of the inscriptions sent direct to him by Joseph Gergan. He adds that, apart from the name *Blon-po Rin-chen* of *Żaṅ-żuṅ* (*Gu-ge*), he found no name of historical interest in the two eleventh century inscriptions.

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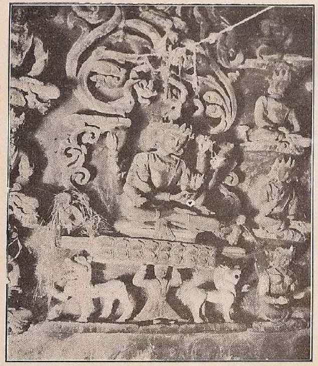
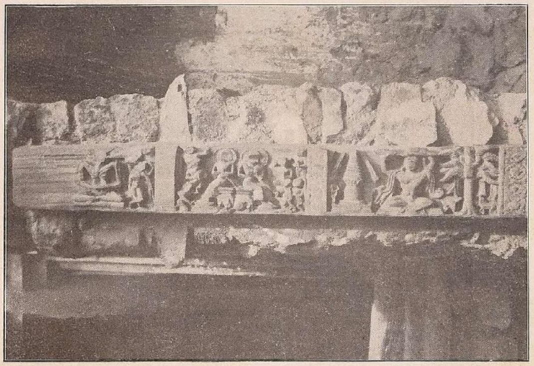


(*b*) North wall of Gser-khaṅ.



(*a*) Carved lintel beam.

(*c*) East wall with a small part of north wall of Gser-khaṅ.

(*d*) East wall, centre, of Gser-khaṅ.

(*e*) South wall of Gser-khaṅ.

(*f*) Vairocana image in Lha-khaṅ-dkar-po.